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Ethnoterritorial concurrence in plural societies: the Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas*

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Introduction: conceptual assumptions

Influential theories developed by North-American social scientists have frequently concentrated on the description and prescription of social categories having as referential contexts those of the USA and Canada. Some of those approaches —with universalist pretensions— has impinged upon interpretations made by other academics around the world in quite a spurious manner.

Functional diffusionism, in particular, has persistently conveyed the idea that internal territorial differences within nation states were to disappear with the extension of liberal democracy and industrial capitalism. As communication of political, economic and cultural matters increased, the peoples of different regions would develop a new common identity, which would transcend their differences (Deutsch, 1966)[1]. Centre-periphery dichotomy was destined to decline as society became 'modernised' by means of elite-initiated policies aimed at achieving social standardisation (e.g. common language and citizenship). Likewise, cultural identities of ethnic groups and minorities would be replaced by a set of class-orientated conflicts, or conflicts among interest groups. Thus, modernisation was regarded to have brought about the idea of an all-embracing state national identity rooted in both cultural and civic axes. History has falsified repeatedly such analyses.

At the turn of the twentieth century, all-embracing identities are openly questioned and have become problematic. While being corroded by the forces of globalisation they are also subject to fragmentation, competition and overlapping elements of a multiple and diverse nature. The discontinuity and dislocation of social arrangements provide that different identities —particularly, territorial— relate to each other in quite an unpredictable manner. In fact, identities are shared in various degrees by individuals and are subject to constant internalisation by group members (Giddens, 1991; Greenfeld, 1992; Melucci, 1989; Smith, 1991).

A considerable problem arises on establishing boundaries and degrees to citizens' self-identification, and on interpreting those causes for political mobilisation related to territorial identities. If a strengthening of meso-level identities is noticeable, a supranational level of civic membership and institutional development can also be perceived (e.g. europeanisation). This process of convergence can conciliate supranational, state and local identities in apparent conflict among themselves[2].

In this paper we deal primarily with the concept of *ethnoterritoriality*, which refers to a dimension where conflicts and political mobilisations are developed and have as chief social actors those ethnic groups that possess a geographical underpinning.

Such a spatial reference is identifiable within the boundaries of a polity, usually of a compound or plural composition (Coakley, 1994; Moreno, 1988; Rudolph and Thompson, 1992).

In plural societies individuals are tied to cultural reference groups which might be in competition among themselves (Barth, 1969). This results in a multiplicity of socio-political identities, dynamic and often shared, which are not necessarily expressed explicitly. Therefore, identity markers are malleable and the intensity of their manifestation greatly depends upon contingent circumstances (Anderson, 1983; Brass, 1991; Cohen, 1992; Hobsbawm, 1990).

The revival of ethnoterritorial political movements in the Western world has coincided with an increasing challenge to the centralist model of the unitary state (Keating, 1988; 1996). In the case of Spain, as in other pluriethnic states, regional devolution and federalisation seek to articulate a response to the *stimuli* of the diversity or plurality of society, comprising cultural/ethnic groups with differences of language, history or traditions which can also be reflected in the party system.

Despite its secular ethnic conflicts, Spain is an entity clearly identifiable as a historical unity. This unity goes beyond the simple aggregation of territories and peoples with no other affinity than their coexistence under the rule of one common monarch or political power. However, the social and cultural cohesion that makes up Spain's unity does not obliterate its internal oppositions.

Both processes of state building and national-formation in modern Spain explain to a high degree how citizens express their territorial identities and institutional allegiances. During the XIX and XX centuries Spanish Liberals and Reformists carried out a programme of state nationalisation. But the profound attachment of Spaniards to their nationalities and regions remained not only firm but, in some cases, found renewed ways of cultural revival (e.g.. Catalonia's *Reinaxença*).

At present, the persistence of a *dual identity* or *compound nationality* in Spain reveals the ambivalent nature of their internal ethnoterritorial relations:

> **"Spain ... is a state for all Spaniards, a nation-state for a large part of the Spanish population, and only a state but not a nation for important minorities" (Linz, 1975: 423).**

Consequently, Spanish citizens incorporate —in variable proportions— both local/ethnoterritorial and state/national identities. The degree of internal consent and dissent in decentralised Spain has in the concept of *dual identity* a useful methodological tool for socio-political interpretations[3].

Indeed, the quest for self-government by meso-level communities is in full accordance with the variable manifestation of such duality: the more the primordial ethnoterritorial identity prevails upon modern state identity, the higher the demands for political autonomy. Conversely, the more characterised the state-national identity is, the less likely it would be for ethnoterritorial conflicts to appear. At the extreme, complete absence of one of the two elements of dual identity would lead to a socio-political fracture in the pluriethnic state, and demands for self-government would probably take the form of independence. In other words, when citizens in a sub-state community identify themselves in an exclusive manner, the institutional outcome of such antagonism will also tend to be exclusive.

It has been argued that political accommodation to secure political and institutional stability in pluriethnic societies or polyarchies is almost impossible. Furthermore, attempts made to achieve such a goal are bound to result in either the break-up of the state or the consolidation of a type of hegemonic authoritarianism for the control of the state's unity (Dahl, 1971; Horowitz, 1985)[4]. Contemporary liberal thinkers have greatly revitalised the debate regarding individual and collective rights. Most of them can be labelled as 'liberal nationalists' (Tamir, 1993). Some have persuasively argued on the case of multiculturalism and the politics of recognition for minorities. However, some of their normative analyses insist upon the unfeasibility of accommodating ethnonational groups within federations –as would illustrate the case of Quebec and Canada[5].

This papers sustains the view ethnoterritorial co-operation and agreement may not only overcome conflicts and divergence within plural polities, but can also provide a deepening of democracy by means of favouring citizens' participation at all possible levels of institutional life and political decision-making. In the case of Spain, this development overlaps with its internal ethnoterritorial and cultural diversity.

In the following section a succinct review and interpretation of some of the main developments in Spain's recent history will pave the way for a discussion of the Spanish model of *multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence* which is analysed subsequently.

The last section of this paper focus on the growing role played by those meso-communities in Europe which have been able to make compatible the general and the particular. This development seems to be in line with a trend towards a new *cosmopolitan localism*.

Unity and diversity in contemporary Spain

Spain is a plural national state made up of nationalities[6] and regions. Its territorial unity has been put under strain by the centrifugal action of its ethnoterritorial and linguistic diversity[7], as well as by that of either weak state institutions or, sometimes, by violent central rule. Moreover, there has been a traditional lack of congruence between political and economic powers. This 'non-congruence'[8] has traditionally nourished the centrifugal tendencies present in modern Spanish history, tendencies that found expression in a number of armed conflicts.

Centre and periphery in post-colonial Spain

With the Restoration of the monarchy (1876-1923), and the centralising dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-30) which followed, a new centrally led attempt to impose uniformity on the country reared its head, but it ended in failure.

The establishment of universal male suffrage in 1890 had the notable effect of placing Catalan incipient nationalism, or *Catalanisme*, squarely in the Spanish political scene. A combination of disparity in Catalonia's social structures[9] and impoverished rural Spain was an important cause of the rise of Catalan nationalism. In particular, the differences between Spain's two major cities, Madrid and Barcelona, became increasingly evident[10].

The Basque Nationalist Party, founded by Sabino de Arana Goiri in 1895, was less successful than the Catalanist *Lliga*[11] in obtaining a class-wide support, partly because of its religious emphasis and its ethnocentric claims. Early Basque

nationalism underlined traditional community values in opposition to bourgeois industrial society, the effects of which included a considerable influx into the Basque country of migrants from the rest of Spain. Primitive Basque essentialism of a racist character was the ideological basis of early Basque nationalism, which combined with powerful populist elements and religious exclusivism to produce a discourse quite distinct from that of Catalan nationalism. This latter ideology was more intellectual and less folkloric, and has always been less secessionist in character. The reason behind its having provoked greater resistance than Basque nationalism ought perhaps to be sought in the fact that it offered an alternative view of Spain, something which Basque nationalism has frequently turned its back on. Both nationalisms, however, could be seen as political manifestations of a vigorous and prosperous periphery, which contrasted with the often-parasitic centralism of the Spanish State to which it was subordinated.

In other Spanish territories, regionalism came in different forms, in many cases stimulated by the action of the Catalan and Basque movements, and reflected the ethnoterritorial diversity of plural Spain. Partly as a consequence of the federal experience of the First Republic (1873), there were clamours for recognition in Galicia, Valencia, Andalusia, and Asturias. Chronologically, the appearance of explicit claims for regional autonomy in contemporary Spanish politics occurred in the years around the turn of the present century.

The Second Republic, the Civil War, and the Franco dictatorship

In spite of its short existence, the Second Republic (1931-39) contributed largely to the resolution of ethnoterritorial conflict. One of the most notable improvements was the constitutional design of state as a regional model, situated somewhere between a unitary and a federal state. This conceded statutes of autonomy to Catalonia[12], the Basque Country[13] and Galicia[14]. There is no doubt that the regional autonomy question also played a fundamental part in the political polarisation process before the Civil War (1936-39). Even within the republican forces the devolution issue created no little turmoil.

The *autonomist* process, though incipient, was spreading throughout Spain by the time the Civil War broke out. With the victory of General Franco's forces, a long period of political centralisation ensued, aiming once again to create a uniform Spain.

Two of the most notable pathological fixations of the Franco dictatorship (1939-75) were anti-communism and anti-separatism. The ‘sacred unity of the homeland’ was regarded as an indispensable unifying element and *raison d'être* of General Franco's despotic regime. To a large extent, Francoism justified itself through its ability to suppress and extirpate all forms of home-rule[15], regionalism and sub-state nationalism. Any form of federalism or wish for autonomy was understood by the Franco regime as ‘separatism’.

The Francoist conception of national unity, at the expense of the cultural and ethnic variety of the people of Spain, degenerated into an obsessive dogma. In fact, the linguistic and cultural oppression of Francoism stimulated regionalism and peripheral nationalism in Spain. From the 1960s onward, *autonomism* intensified owing much of its emergence to the nature of Francoism. During the final years of its existence, the opposition to the regime developed a compact programme for democratic rights and for the political decentralisation of the Spanish State. In the so-called ‘‘historical nationalities’’ in particular (Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque

Country), the forces opposed to Francoism were able to articulate a political discourse denouncing the absence of democracy and the continuous official attacks on their identities. In these communities, democratic and ethnoterritorial claims became inseparable. In this way the ideology of *autonomism* and political decentralisation made its way into Spanish democratic political consciousness.

The 1978 Constitution and the decentralisation of power

After Franco's death in 1975, the transitional process to democracy began in earnest. The democratic parties did not have a clear-cut model for the type of decentralised state they broadly advocated. However, the majority wanted home-rule for all the Spanish nationalities and regions. The constitutional expression of such a strong platform constituted a major political challenge, for Spanish modern history had witnessed tragic failures where ethnicity and the territorial sharing of power were concerned.

The broad party political consensus which made the drawing up of the 1978 Constitution possible, also brought with it an element of ambiguity in the formulation of the territorial organisation of the Spanish State. In fact, two different conceptions of Spain, which had traditionally confronted each other, were formulated. Subsequently, a middle way was negotiated and explicitly recognised by the Constitution: on the one hand, the idea of an indivisible Spanish nation-state, on the other, a concept of Spain as an ensemble of diverse peoples, historic nationalities and regions.

The 1978 Spanish Constitution made it possible for one, three, all or none of the *Comunidades Autónomas* to be self-governing. It depended on the political will expressed by the inhabitants of each nationality or region, or by their political representatives. It also made it possible for the degree of self-government to be wide or restricted according to the wishes of the nationalities and regions. Conservatives, Centrists, Nationalists, Socialists and Communists hammered out an agreement for the implementation of the federalising *Estado de las Autonomías*. The accepted solution took the form of an unwritten pledge to extend the procedures of political transaction and consociationalism into the future.

This open model of asymmetrical federalisation did not presuppose the ways and means by which the different spatial entities could finally be articulated. Thus, an implicit desire was expressed by the 'Fathers' of the 1978 Constitution to provide the procedures and degrees of self-government to be pursued by the nationalities and regions while allowing them a high degree of flexibility. The formulation of a clear division of powers based upon conventional' federal techniques was, however, avoided.

The construction of the *Estado de las Autonomías* had to follow a 'top-down' process of decentralisation. This way of doing things is just one of the options available in the development of federal systems. The result at the close of the twentieth century is not much more than a series of practices of a federal nature involving a series of politically competitive units. Even so, the full development of multilateral decision-making, or a genuine common exercise of three-tier government action (at central, regional and local levels simultaneously), remains to be seen.

The decentralisation process embodied in the 1978 Spanish Constitution has undergone a long period of consolidation. The degree of autonomy for the Spanish

nationalities and regions is considerable. This is illustrated by the evolution of the distribution of public expenditure in the three-tier system of government that is reproduced in the following table:

	1981[1]	**1984**	**1987**	**1990**	**1992**	**1997**	**1999**[2]
Central	87.3	75.6	72.6	66.2	63.0	59.5	54
Regional	3.0	12.2	14.6	20.5	23.2	26.9	33
Local	9.7	12.1	12.8	13.3	13.8	13.6	13

[1] Beginning of the process of devolution

[2] Government's estimates

Source: **Spanish Ministry of Public Administrations**

Support for autonomy, apart from the Basque and Catalan communities, has been particularly strong in Andalusia and other regions (the Canary Islands, Galicia and Valencia)[16]. Certainly it is the case that some regions were 'encouraged' by their most prominent political parties to enter into the *autonomist* process. Some areas with no self-governing tradition whatsoever were suddenly inspired to claim home-rule rights. These were mainly uniprovincial communities lacking ethnoterritorial specificity, unless they recognised their origins elsewhere, such as the cases of Cantabria, La Rioja, and even the province of Madrid. In some cases, the decentralisation process has entailed a break-off from the ethnoterritorial base of certain provinces. One of the consequences of this has been the creation of hybrids such as Castille-La Mancha or Castille and Leon.

The cases of Navarre and the Catalan Countries (*Països Catalans*)[17] have exemplified the difficulties in setting clear boundaries in certain regions. The Catalan Countries are perceived as a whole with a composite identity deserving political treatment as such by not just pan-Catalanist parties, but by the usually more cautious President of the Catalan Government, Jordi Pujol, in his 'federalist' understanding of Spain[18].

For some Basque nationalists, Navarre is an integral part of their country that can never be given up. This is the claim made by both Herri Batasuna, the political branch of ETA, the Basque terrorist separatists, and ETA itself. However, for the majority of people of Navarre, however, the old kingdom has more than enough right to its own constitution.

In general terms, at the end of this century, it can be said that the decentralisation process has been assimilated by most Spaniards. This reality legitimates its political expression. However, although far from over, the decentralisation process needs to gradually adapt to new forms of inter-governmental relations, especially at the level of institutional collaboration[19]. The articulation of institutional relations involving shared powers and responsibilities lies at the very base of the federal-like ethnoterritorial relations of Spain.

Multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence in Spain

The gradual establishment of the *Estado de las Autonomías* in Spain has generated a complex of relations which can be explained by the characterisation of a model of *multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence* (Moreno, 1995). Its defining traits incorporate social, economic and political elements in a dynamic manner and are, thus, the main constituent elements of the Spanish case of *federalisation* (Moreno, 1998 a/b). There

are chiefly elements of asymmetry, heterogeneity[20] and plurality underlying the semantic interpretation of *concurrence*[21].

For the purposes of our discussion, a sequential categorisation is adopted. First, two 'axioms' are identified to have an important impact in the Spanish situation, although they refer to general features that are common to most of the contemporary world's decentralised and federal systems: (A) conflicting intergovernmental relations, and (B) the politicising of ethnoterritorial institutions. Secondly, two 'premises'[22] are analysed in relation to the stage prior to the development of the *Estado de las Autonomías*: (C) the differential fact, and (D) the centralist inertia. Thirdly, three 'principles' are considered to be the fundamental pillars upon which the organisational rationale of the 1978 Constitution rests, explicitly or implicitly: (E) the democratic decentralisation, (F) the comparative grievance, and (G) the inter-territorial solidarity. Lastly, three 'rules' are assessed to be the most compelling elements in the social and political structuring of the open process of decentralisation in Spain: (H) the centrifugal pressure, (I) the ethnoterritorial mimesis, and (J) the inductive allocation of powers. These constituent elements which characterised the model of *multiple ethnoterritorial concurrence* in Spain are succinctly reviewed as follows:

(A) The axiom of *conflicting inter-governmental relations* is associated to the political leanings and party political affiliations present at all levels of government and institutions representing territorial interests. Conflict and agreement are present in inter-governmental relations in Spain as in any other federal state. In many respects, it also provides a testing ground for Spain's democracy. A climate of permanent political bargaining among local, regional and central governments is bound to remain as the most characteristic feature of the Spanish process of federalisation.

Criticisms of the degree of dispersion and fragmentation of political life have been voiced in Spain. Some have proposed new forms of centralisation as 'solutions' to what is considered an unbearable situation. Such criticisms come from those who feel threatened by a sense of uncertainty and the changing nature of intergovernmental relations. These perceptions are not in tune with the constitutional precepts and their implications, which have guided the development of the Spanish system of decentralised government.

(B) The axiom of the *politicising of ethnoterritorial institutions* involves the wish, at all three levels of government, to maximise their political image and performance. This exercise of the meso-governmental patronage is not only carried out for domestic purposes but also, given the process of European convergence and the increasing inter-dependence of the world economy, also as the means of attracting interest and investment from abroad[23]. This is in line with the growing capacity of regional elites for negotiation. Their practices are legitimised by the constitutional order and are grounded in the increasing budgetary manoeuvrability of the governments of the *Comunidades Autónomas*.

In any case, the European vocation made patent by all of the Spanish nationalities and regions is to be emphasised. In fact, some of the most powerful minority nationalisms in Spain (Basque, Catalan) regard the consolidation of the European Union as the most desirable scenario where the powers of central governments and the very idea of the nation-state would be in retreat. This is surely symptomatic of the 'modernisation' of ethnoterritorial diversity in Spain after the long stagnation of the Franco era.

(C) In the early stages of the decentralisation process, the mobilisation patterns of the ‘‘historical nationalities’’ were founded on the premise of the *differential fact*. This idea is directed towards the Catalan, Galician and Basque cases, notable for their non-Castillian languages, and for their own cultures and specific histories. However, these last two elements are also common to the other *Comunidades Autónomas*. The expression *differential fact* is taken to refer to a feature or combination of features that characterise an ethnic group or community with respect to others. It is, therefore, a concept deriving its meaning from a not easily quantifiable subjective perspective that is rooted in the ethnicity or ethnic identity of a given people.

Self-awareness of their own *differential fact* is a permanent incentive for the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia to maintain their institutional distinctiveness with relation to the rest of the Spanish regions. However, it is worth reminding that the socio-political mobilisation in Andalusia which led to the popular referendum of February 28, 1980, broke up a model —one implicitly accepted by the Basque and Catalan nationalist parties— which hardly offered a degree of de-concentration for the other Spanish regions.

When the *differential fact* is seen in terms of politics and of the distribution of power, it displays an asymmetry which is not easy to interpret as regards the future development of the Spanish *Estado de las Autonomías*.

(D) The premise of the *centralist inertia* is rooted in a long-standing perception that the central administration (erroneously identified with the state)[24] has supremacy over regional and local tiers of governments. This perception is the result not only of a tradition of dictatorial rule, which includes Franco's lasting dictatorship (1939-1975), but also of the Jacobin view imported from France and embraced by the Spanish liberals during the 19th century.

Thus, at the beginning of the decentralisation process a significant number of politicians and state officials disregarded demands, needs, and expectations of both regional and local administrations. They tried to discredit aspirations for home rule. But the decision of the Constitutional Court against the main provisions of the centralising *LOAPA* (constitutional law passed in Parliament in 1982 with the support of the two main parties in 1982, but fiercely opposed by the nationalists)[25] was a decisive setback for their attempts for re-centralisation. Since then, the whole process of regional autonomy has not been free from bureaucratic friction and interference, a result of this ingrained centralist mentality which still is well-extended among central bodies and institutions in Spain.

(E) Paradoxically, Francoism was the main factor responsible for the subsequent development of the principle of *democratic decentralisation*. A unitary concept of Spain had been imposed through a defence of Spanish nationalism, taken from the totalitarian ideas and values of some of those who had ‘won’ the Civil War. In the eyes of many of those who had ‘lost’ the war, all things Spanish adopted an air of cultural genocide, political repression and the re-invention of history. As a consequence, many of the democratic forces were suspicious of the ‘Spanish’. During Francoism, and for nearly forty years, the ‘Spanish’ symbolism had tried to hide the plural reality of Spain.

In the early 1970s, the democratic opposition forces to Franco's regime articulated a solid strategy of political action that amalgamated both the struggles for the recovery of democratic liberties and for the decentralisation of power. The quest for

democracy and territorial home-rule, thus, went hand in hand.

Political milieu for the development of peripheral nationalism, regionalism and *autonomism* can be regarded in this respect as an unwanted effect of hyper-centralist Francoism. A large part of the growth in regional self-government during the 1970s and 1980s was due to the desire to establish democratic institutions, which brought decision-making closer to the people. Since then, the existence of democracy and freedom in Spain is inexorably linked to the continued protection and survival of power in a decentralised form, and the autonomy of the nationalities and regions.

(F) The principle of *comparative grievance* determines to a large degree the mobilisation patterns of the Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas*. According to this, the right to autonomy and the subsequent political mobilisation is the result of an ethnic competition in search of equal access to the institutions of self-government. Furthermore, none of these regions wants to be left behind. This principle interacts in a conflictive manner with the premise of the *differential fact* claimed by the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia. Perceptions like *comparative grievance* and the *differential fact* are not easily extensible to positive legislation in that they reflect social realities that are not necessarily quantifiable in financial or institutional terms.

Comparisons may be made from perspectives such as that found in Catalonia, a comparatively richer community where the perception of a *comparative fiscal grievance* has traditionally manifested itself in the form of a strong argument in support of political *Catalanisme*. This perception is based on the idea that their community receives much less from the central administration than their total contribution to the state Treasury. This feeling of financial discrimination has not only been perceived as an obstacle to the later development of Catalonia, but, significantly, it has been traditionally interpreted as the negligence of an inefficient state apparatus which also fails to promote the growth of other less developed regions in Spain[26].

Localism in Spain, linked to a strong sense of ethnoterritorial pride, has continued to nourish both expectations and concerns of the *Comunidades Autónomas*. In particular, it has fuelled formal and informal mechanisms of political monitoring by which regions attempt to avoid any perception of being discriminated among themselves.

(G) The principle of *inter-territorial solidarity* is not only a constitutional precept but also the formal expression of a more prosaic reality: the transfer of financial resources from the wealthier to the poorer regions of Spain. This aims at achieving a common basic level in the provision of services so that the standard of living of all Spaniards would be brought to the same level. Furthermore, the 1978 Constitution observes that the Spanish state must establish a just and adequate economic balance between the different areas of Spain (art. 138).

With the gradual development of the 'home-rule-all-round' process in Spain, nationalities and regions regarded territorial autonomy not only as providing the means for bringing institutional decision-making closer to the citizens. *Comunidades Autónomas*, particularly the economically poorer territories, also laid emphasis on the constitutional principle of inter-regional solidarity. A financial instrument was created for this purpose, the *Fondo de Compensación Interterritorial* (Inter-territorial Compensation Fund), although the aim of re-distributing funds has largely been neglected due to the absence of any clear criteria of positive discrimination in favour

of the poorer *Comunidades Autónomas*. Differences in management capacity, however, have brought about an incentive for the less-developed regional administrations to catch up with those more advanced in new policy design and provision. A 'demonstration effect' regarding the implementation of policies by the *Comunidades Autónomas* is noticeable[27].

(H) The political pressure exerted upon central power by both Basque and Catalan nationalisms decisively contributed in 1978 to the establishment of a constitutional accommodation, which implicitly recognised the multinational nature of Spanish society. Since then the rule of *centrifugal pressure* has been repeatedly instrumentalised by the most vigorous ethnoterritorial elites: Basque, Catalan, and Galician nationalists, first; regionalists in Andalusia, Navarre, Valencia and the Canary Islands, at a later stage. In recent times, a similar pattern is observable with respect to other regional parties and formations in Aragon, Cantabria or Extremadura[28]. Note that *centrifugal pressure* is meant to be used bot only as a vehicle for negotiation, but also to dissuade certain politicians and higher civil servants of the central administration from reverting to centralising tendencies.

The continuous and active presence of representatives of the Catalan and Basque nationalist parties in the Spanish Parliament has been crucial in the consolidation an *autonomist* vision of the state with respect to the political relations between the three levels of government. What is more, the increasing relative power of regional or federated organisations associated to national coalitions and parties has also decisively contributed the federalisation of politics in Spain[29].

The centrifugal effects of political negotiation on a territorial level in Spain tend to be multiplied by the bilateral relations between central and regional administrations. The practice of bilateralism, combined with comparative grievance, entails major difficulties for the *Estado de las Autonomías*, given that the seventeen *Comunidades Autónomas* will exert centrifugal pressures of every kind over questions of common interest[30].

(I) According to the rule of *ethnoterritorial mimesis*, the 'historical nationalities' (Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia) aspired to rights and powers comparable to those of the central administration, their own police force, external signs and ornamental emblems, official visits abroad, exclusive rights established by regional parliaments, public policies in the fields of health, education and social welfare, and so on[31]. Subsequently, a second group of *Comunidades Autónomas* wanted the same powers as the nationalities (such as Andalusia in 1981, followed by Valencia and the Canary Islands)[32]. Finally, these same communities became models for latecomer regions, which have tried to 'imitate' the institutional outlook of early-rising nationalities and regions.

In line with the concept of *ethnoterritorial mimesis*, it could be argued that Basque nationalism, especially in its most secessionist forms, has played with the idea of setting up an independent state for the Basque Country. Given the peculiar confederation of its *historical territories*, such a state would be paradoxically structured very much like plural Spain. *Catalanisme*, for its part, wants an independent fiscal system rather like the quota mechanisms currently operating in the Basque Country, if not simply a greater degree of financial autonomy. Galicia would probably follow Catalonia in having powers transferred from central state institutions. It should be noted, however, that the *mechanicity* of the mimetic process would remain relative to the extent to which citizens of the Basque Country identified themselves as "Spanish", at least to some significant degree, and that *Catalanisme*

maintained its tradition of being an inclusive nationalism which seeks to reform Spain as well as Catalonia. The strength of radical nationalism in Galicia does not seem to indicate anything like the collapse of a popular desire to belong to Spain as a whole.

(J) The rule of the *inductive allocation of powers* in the Spanish process of decentralisation acknowledges the absence of a clear-cut constitutional division of powers in the three-tier system of government. This rule, which is implicit in the provisions of Title VIII of the 1978 Constitution, draws attention to the fact that the Spanish decentralisation process has followed an open model of territorial structuring, which only the passing of time has gradually defined, as it shall continue to do.

The 1978 Constitution allows for great flexibility of interpretation where the possibility of self-government is concerned. It depends on the political will of each nationality or region. Furthermore, the constitutional adoption of a device that marked out the allocation of specific powers for the *Comunidades Autónomas* and the required procedure for their adoption, without establishing a clear separation of rights and powers, was the only feasible way to initiate a political decentralisation process. It must be remembered that during the transition to democracy this was one of the thorniest issues to reach agreement upon, and therefore required complete consensus.

Once the seventeen *Comunidades Autónomas* had been established, a further delegation of powers was effected. Its degree of heterogeneity has levelled over time, although the process is far from over. In contrast to the traditional philosophy upon which other federal systems such as those of Germany, Australia, the USA or Switzerland have been modelled and built, the *federalisation* in Spain can only be regarded as complete once a period of intergovernmental familiarity has elapsed. At the same time, the process of European convergence will exercise considerable influence in the future distribution of regional powers and responsibilities.

Meso-communities and the new cosmopolitan localism in Europe

One of the visible effects brought about by financial globalisation is the relative obsolescence of the nation-state. The latter has constituted the central arena of the economic life during the last two centuries. At present, it often attends as a mere spectator the worldwide representation of virtual financial transactions. The one time powerful economic policies established at the national level are now severely restricted by those decisions taken by international trusts, pensions funds or 'whitened' capitals from the transnational organised crime. Furthermore, globalisation affects also to other factors of production, such as components of industrial goods made in third countries, as well as the increasing legion of apatrid workers.

Thus, globalisation brings with it a transfer of authority and power from the states to the markets. New rules of global markets and corporate strategies of multinational companies have a growing impact in setting the pace of both international and national patterns of economic development. Obviously, such markets rules and strategies are not territorially 'neutral'. On considering the most profitable portfolios for investment, local incentives play an important role. But less-tangible factors, such as institutional and political stability, social cohesion or cultural and political affinities between place of origin and destination are also crucial.

National governments negotiate among themselves in order to establish wide frameworks of economic transactions (GATT, EMU, TLC). In parallel they also negotiate with firms, and try to adjust to the consequences of the relationships between firms. State sovereignty is becoming more nominal than real. Furthermore, the capacities of national governments to pursue economic policies divergent to the rest of their neighbouring countries are severely limited[33].

Given this context of internationalisation, the role played by the meso-governments is acquiring relevance in most aspects of contemporary life. A renewal of community life at the meso-level derives mainly from the combination of two main factors: (a) A growing rejection to centralisation in unitary states coupled with a strengthening of supranational politics, and (b) A reinforcement of local identities and societal cultures with an territorial underpinning. This 'new communitarism' in Europe[34] affects not only to minority nations (Catalonia, Scotland), or new nation-states (Czech Republic, Slovenia), but also to regions and metropolitan areas (Brussels region, Greater London, Milan-Lombardy, Paris-*Île de France*). The latter seem to follow a pattern of re-creating those 'medium-size' political communities that flourished in the age prior to the New World discoveries (Italian city-states, Hanseatic League, principalities). However, and in contrast with the *Renaissance* period, there exists now a common institutional tie inherent to the process of europeanisation.

Meso-governments are no longer dependent on those programmes of rationalisation carried out during the XIX and XX centuries by central bureaucracies and elites. Their own entrepreneurs, social leaders and local *intelligentsia* have taken up many of the initiatives and roles once reserved to those 'enlightened' actors holding the resorts of power at the centre of their nation states. Positions of political influence are now more evenly distributed in central, meso-level and local institutions. Co-option of regional elites to the central institutions of government are no longer the exclusive routes available to 'successful' political careers.

In the case of Europe, territorial identities are mainly pro-active. They are not mere mechanisms of response to control the informational avalanche generated by the telecom revolution. Some other functional identities linked to other dimensions of social life, such as cultural forms, gender, religion or individual sociobiological conditions, can be interpreted as new forms of 'resistance'. Apparently, these do not seem to derive from those old identities present in the civil societies of the industrial age (Castells, 1997).

In the UE context the reinforcement of sub-state territorial identities is deeply associated to powerful material and symbolic referents of the past (culture, history, territories). They seem to have engaged in a process of innovation departing from a commonality, which seeks to overcome the de-naturalising effects of global hypermodernity[35]. However, their manifestations do not take refuge in a reactive parochialism. The very idea of a 'fortress Europe' is not embraced as workable scheme. Furthermore, it appears to be in contradiction with the very cosmopolitan nature of local, national and supranational values in the Old Continent.

Immigration from non-EU countries has certainly had an impact in the growing sentiments of xenophobia in Europe. Nevertheless, immigrants willing to take on those values of civic pluralism and tolerance find no major difficulties of insertion in the economic and social life at their first 'port of entry', i.e. local and meso-communities.

In the case of Spain, the process of home-rule-all-round has considerably allowed the extension of *cosmopolitan localism*. This is reflected in both societal interests aimed at developing a sense of local community, and at participating actively in international spheres. There is, thus, a growing congruence between the particular and the general. Note that all Spanish meso-governments have made explicit their European vocation. They all share the desire of majority of Spaniards for a EU that would be not only the main economic institutional *locus* at medium-term future, but which would also provide the legitimising bases for a future European citizenship.

Conclusion

At the turn of the millennium ethnoterritoriality has come to the fore of political life in democratic plural societies. The liberal nation-state is not only subject to pressures from 'below' but also from 'above'. Among the latter, economic globalisation and the transfers of state power to both markets and supranational institutions are to be underlined.

In Europe there is a revival of meso-communities. These are taking up initiatives and leading roles in many areas of social life. Governments at sub-state level are no longer subordinate to programmes of rationalisation being implemented by central bureaucracies and elites. Regional actors can perform a good many functions of those traditionally held by central elites. Authority, influence and power are in the process of re-distribution within and beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. Likewise, politicians and policies can have an impact in wider institutional frameworks even if their actions are initiated at local or regional levels.

In sum, meso-communities have developed a new a *cosmopolitan localism* that combine, on the one hand, an active opposition to the centralised model of the unitary state and, on the other, a mobilisation of local identities coupled with an active supra-national participation.

Political accommodation and institutional stability are regarded to be unsuitable for polyarchies according to the functionalist school of political science. Attempts to conciliate both goals have been argued to result in the break-up of the state or the consolidation of authoritarianism. The case of plural Spain offers an example of how multiple identities and political loyalties can be accommodated allowing ethnoterritorial co-operation and agreement among its constituent nationalities and regions. As the case of Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas* illustrates, multiple concurrence of territorial interests can not only overcome conflicts but can also provide a deepening of democracy by means of a closest access of civil society to political decision-making.

Notes

[1] For William Safran, one of the prominent characteristics of American social science in general, and the behavioralist-functionalist school of political science in particular, is its ahistoricist bias. History is rejected on two grounds: "First...as a succession of events that…do not lend themselves to comparison and generalisation...Second…because it is associated with pre-modern (primitive) societies…" (1987: 13). 'Mainstream' Marxists have traditionally taken a functional approach to the analysis of political integration and modernisation (cfr. Connor, 1984).

[2] According to Pérez Agote, the fact that two identities can be referred to a larger entity does not preclude their possible relationship of incompatibility (1994: 311). That would be the case, for

example, of both Basque and Spanish exclusive forms of self-identification However, the subsuming of the those identities under the European confines implies a nexus –even though it is not explicitly sought— of compatibility between them.

[3] In all seventeen Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas* there is a high proportion of citizens who claim some form of dual identity. The question addressed to them in the successive polls is as follows: *'In general, would you say that you feel...(1) 'Only Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc.'; (2) 'More Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc. than Spanish'; (3) 'As much Andalusian, Basque, Catalan as Spanish'; (4) 'More Spanish than Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc.'; or (5) 'Only Spanish'*. In the period October 1990-June 1995 a degree of duality was expressed by around 70 per cent of the total Spanish population (i.e. categories 2, 3 and 4). Approximately 30 per cent of all Spaniards expressed a single identity ('Only Spanish', or 'Only Andalusian, Basque, Catalan, etc.'). For an analysis of the case of Catalonia see Moreno and Arriba (1996).

[4] Robert Dahl's position is in line with the views of Ernest Baker who also regarded political secessionism and authoritarianism as the two viable options in ethnocultural polyarchies. See Connor (1994: 124), and Linz (1973: 103-4).

[5] For Will Kymlicka ethnoterritorial accommodation would not constitute a stable political solution but a previous step to secession (1996: 45). Linz's views are, instead, that federalism can consolidate liberal democracy in multinational states (1997). On multiculturalism cfr. Kymlicka (1995), Taylor (1992) and Walzer (1997). On Quebec and the Canadian Federation, cfr. Burgess (1990), Gagnon (1993), and McRoberts (1997).

[6] 'Nationalities' and 'regions' are the constituent territories of Spain according to the 1978 Constitution. It is not easy to distinguish conceptually the term 'nation' from that of 'nationality'. Such a terminological distinction was to a great extent a consequence of the dichotomy between 'nation-state' and 'state of the nationalities' as regards the cases of the Austria-Hungary and Ottoman Empires at the beginning of the twentieth century. In broad terms, nationality can be referred to as a minority nation which has acceded to a degree of institutional autonomy or independence within a multinational state and which concurs or co-exists with a majority nation and/or other ethnoterritorial groups. Cfr. Krejcí and Velímsky (1981: 32-43).

[7] Castillian, or Spanish as is usually referred to elsewhere, is the official language of the Kingdom of Spain. Approximately a fourth the Spanish total population of 40 million is bilingual. Their vernacular languages are also official in their respective territories: Catalan (spoken by 4.2 million in Catalonia; 2.1 in Valencia; 0.2 in the Balearic Islands, and 0.05 in Aragon); Basque (0.7 million in the Basque Country, and 0.05 in Navarre); Galician (2.3 million). Other official languages, as declared in their regional Statutes of Autonomy, are Bable (spoken by 0.4 million in Asturias) and Aranese (0.004 in Catalonia) (Data collected from Sanmartí Roset, 1997: 67). There are also a number of dialects of the aforementioned languages widely spoken in other regions (Andalusia, Canary Islands, Extremadura, Murcia).

[8] The traditional political and economic non-congruence in Spain has been shown in a permanent rivalry between centre and periphery. This dichotomy has historically translated into two main alternative models of state organisation: centralist-authoritarian and federalist-democratic. Cfr. Gourevitch (1979) for the types of economic and political non-congruence.

[9] On the social structure of Catalonia, see Giner's monograph (1980).

[10] Between 1877 and 1920, the proportion of workers in Madrid working in industry over the city's total working population grew considerably from 18.4 to 42.5%, but remained behind Barcelona in this respect, with 37.1% in 1877 to 54% in 1920. Perhaps it was more significant that the proportion of 'unproductive' middle classes in Madrid, consisting of civil servants, members of the Armed Forces and domestic staff (23.6% in 1877 and 15.3% in 1920), was greater than that of Barcelona (5.9% in 1877 and 5% in 1920 (Data taken from Linz, 1967: 209).

[11] The *Lliga Catalana*, later *Lliga Regionalista*, was a Catalanist political party founded in 1901, later influential in Spain under the leadership of Francesc Cambó.

[12] On April 14th 1931 the Spanish Second Republic was proclaimed. On the same day the Catalan

nationalist leader, Francesc Macià, declared a Catalan Republic and the creation of an Iberian Confederation. After negotiations, the *Generalitat* was re-established. The *Generalitat* is Catalonia's government, of medieval origin.

[13] Three days after the proclamation of the Second Republic, an assembly of Basque mayors gathered by José Antonio Aguirre, leader of the Basque Nationalist Party, claimed their right to autonomy within a Spanish federal republic, by the historic Oak of Guernica. Nevertheless, parliamentary approval of the proposal was thornier than the Catalan statute.

[14] In Galicia, the *Organización Regional Gallega Autónoma* (O.R.G.A., Autonomous Regional Organisation of Galicia), led by Santiago Casares Quiroga, had instigated the drafting of a proposal for autonomy. On June 28th 1936, a referendum was held and around 70% of the Galician electorate voted. The final result was 991.476 votes for and 6.805 against.

[15] With the partial exception of Alava and Navarre These two *foral* territories were able to keep their fiscal privileges as a 'reward' for the participation of many *Carlists* from those provinces who joined Franco's forces during the Civil War (Giner and Moreno, 1990).

[16] After 15 years of deep political and administrative decentralisation, the assessment of the process made by the Spaniards was reflected in the following percentages: 11 per cent ("Totally positive"), 49 per cent ("More positive than negative"), 21 per cent ("More negative than positive"), 10 per cent ("Totally negative"), and 9 per cent ("Don't Knows") (*El País*, November 19, 1995).

[17] 'Catalan Countries'. Expression used by some to denote the Principate of Catalonia, the Kingdom of Valencia, and the Balearic Islands. Frequently included is Rosselló (Roussillon), in southern France, where Catalan is spoken.

[18] 'In the specific case of Spain I could conceivably be a federalist, if the federation was based on genuine and authentic nationalities of the state, viz. Euskadi [Basque Country], Galicia, the whole of Castille, and the Catalan Countries (or just Catalonia, if Valencia and the Islands ... rejected being associated with the Principate)'. (Pujol, 1980: 26).

[19] According to 1990 data, most Spaniards were of the opinion that relations between regional governments and central government should be 'collaborative' (80.7%), and involving 'shared responsibilities' (58.2%). (M. García Ferrando *et al*, 1994: 113).

[20] Asymmetry and heterogeneity, both *de jure* and *de facto*, are particular traits in the process of Spanish 'federalisation' (Moreno, 1997a/b). On internal national differences and the operationalisation of asymmetrical federalism in Spain, cfr. Requejo (1996).

[21] According to Karl Popper (1976) a situation of concurrence can and ought to be explained as an unintentional consequence (usually unavoidable) of the human actions (conscious and planned) of the competitors. These aim at having the monopoly with no further competition. But in a situation of concurrence there is no compulsion to eliminate other concurrent actors.

[22] The term *premise* is meant to be understood as the foundation upon which a subsequent unfolding of events is derived. The terms *axiom, premise, principle* and *rule* should not be regarded as the constituent parts of a philosophical syllogism or as propositions in some logical proof.

[23] For instance, on the occasion of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, the Catalan Government of the *Generalitat* financed full-page advertisements in the international press with the aim of drawing attention to the idea that the city's geographical location is in Catalonia, further placed in a peninsular and European context. Similarly financed publicity has appeared since in other international media, including a Website in internet.

[24] The very term *state* is ambiguously employed in the text of the Constitution. In some Articles (1, 56, 137, and, significantly, in the very title of Title VIII) the intention is for the term to denote the entire organisation of the Spanish legal-political system. Thus, the term covers the regional administrations as well as the other agencies and autonomous bodies that make up the state. In other constitutional articles (3.1, 149 and 150), the state is considered synonymous with the institutions of the central

administration, together with their peripheral administrations, which may on occasions clash with autonomous administrations. The Constitutional Court's judgement of July 28, 1981, clarified the semantic conflict by asserting that the *state* must be regarded as a composite whole which includes all the institutions of central, regional and local governments. Whatever the case, a certain mentality persists among some.

[25] After the attempted military coup of February 23, 1981, influential sectors of the centre-right UCD and the socialist PSOE (then government and main opposition parties, respectively) tried to 'harmonise' the decentralisation process in the style of German federalism. The mistake was to believe that this could be achieved from the all-encompassing vision of the central state administration. The Constitutional Court annulled most of the provisions of the *LOAPA*, and upheld the principle of regional autonomy. This reinforced the legitimacy of the Court, which was to become a pivotal institution in the consolidation of democracy in Spain.

[26] Curiously, Madrid paid up more in taxes than any other community in 1989. Madrid "…has five million inhabitants, compared with Catalonia's six, but in 1989, the takings for Madrid reached 3.3 billion pesetas, higher than Catalonia's 1.87 billion. In the same year, Andalusia, with seven million inhabitants, paid 0.61 billion, while Valencia, with only four million inhabitants, approached this figure, with 0.54 billion [...] In all the major taxes, the first place corresponds to Madrid, in spite of having a million inhabitants less than Catalonia and a similar income. The difference is striking in the case of the IRPF [personal income tax]: in 1989, 1.01 billion pesetas compared to 0.7 billion." (Platón, 1994: 210).

[27] An illustration of this is provided by the Family Minimum Income Programme. This was introduced in the Basque Country in March 1998 to combat poverty and situations of social exclusion, and constituted a precedent in the subsequent programmes of minimum income benefits implemented in all 17 *Comunidades Autónomas*. Although showing a degree of diversity in policy design and coverage, programmes of 'minimum income' developed by the Spanish ''historical nationalities'' and regions aim at combining cash benefits with policies of social insertion (employment promotion and vocational training schemes, primarily).

[28] Among the local parties that have obtained parliamentary representation in Madrid, or in their regional parliaments, the following may be mentioned: *Chunta*, *Coalición Canaria*, *Convergencia de Demócratas Navarra*, *Extremadura Unida*, *Partido Andalucista*, *Partido Aragonés*, *Partido Regionalista de Cantabria*, *Partido Riojano*, *Partido Socialista de Mallorca*, *Partiu Asturianista*, *Unión Alavesa*, *Unión Mallorquina*, *Unión para el Progreso de Cantabria*, *Unión del Pueblo Leonés*, and *Unión Valenciana*.

[29] The organic federal composition of the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (*PSOE*, Socialists and Social Democrats) and *Izquierda Unida* (*IU*, Communists, Radical Socialists and Independent Leftists), as well as the regionalisation of the *Partido Popular* (*PP*, Conservatives and Christian Democrats), and the electoral success of new regional movements has reinforced the crucial importance of the spatial element in Spanish politics.

[30] Intergovernmental co-operation of considerable political value has been initiated by conferences involving the central government and the *Comunidades Autónomas.* Even at the level of consultation, these conferences are vital to the articulation of policies discussed, agreed by consensus, or only partially agreed.

[31] In recent times Catalan nationalists has insisted in the idea of a 'shared sovereignty'. They have sought the support of Basque and Galician democratic nationalists, and proposed a confederal model of political accommodation as in Switzerland (*El País*, March 15, 1998).

[32] Already in 1984, Joan Lerma (President of the Valencian Government) considered that there were not three ''historical nationalities'', but six *Comunidades Autónomas* with different levels of powers: "... they are allowed to get to the same place, and in particular I have to emphasise that the legal treatment for Catalonia and the Basque Country is the same as that for Galicia, but also for Andalusia, the Canaries and for ourselves [the Valencians]" (*La Vanguardia*, April 16, 1984).

[33] Even in France, where indicative planning was used by the state as a powerful instrument to beat the business cycle, the experience of the Mitterrand Government in the early 1980s put into evidence

the feasibility of implementing economic policies independently of the fashion adopted by most of the European Governments of the time. According to Susan Strange: "Neither the control over interest rates nor the country's balance of payments are left under the authority of governments. Even competition policy, like property rights and protected financial services, may come under pressure to conform to standards set outside the state" (1995: 299).

[34] Quite distinct from that prescribed in North America (Etzioni, 1993). Many of the incipient communitarian experiences in the United States may be regarded as reactions to specific social cleavages (criminalisation of social life), as instrumental means of socialisation (overcoming suburban constraints), or as alternative lifestyles to dominant values (possessive individualism).

[35] De-naturalising is used here as meaning the deprivation of the rights of citizenship within an established democratic polity.

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